

February 9, 2015

Dear Senator:

I am writing you to encourage you to **VOTE NO ON SB 202**. I believe, strongly, that one of the main obligations of the physician is to first, do no harm. We are called to care for the sick and suffering. Although it may be frightening to a patient at first, the dying process is part of the natural life cycle of humans and often brings a sense of closure. In the modern era, we now have available multiple tools to help ease the suffering of patients during the end-stage of their lives and dedicated hospice personnel and volunteers to help care for these patients. As a physician who has practiced in this state for over 24 years, I have become well aware of the issues surrounding physician-assisted suicide. To me, the key words are "physician-assisted". We have heard arguments from people stating that they want the ability to determine the end of their own lives, for whatever medical reason. However, the same people want to involve physicians in this process. Normally, as physicians, we view suicide as an abnormality, brought on by depression or impulsiveness. Montana, unfortunately, has one of the highest rate of suicide in the USA, something we should find very troubling. There are established laws on the books in Montana that prohibit assisting another person with suicide. Those laws were thought out and make good sense. Allowing physician-assisted suicide opens a Pandora's Box in our state, due to the very nature of trying to determine who is a candidate for physician-assisted suicide. A person may think that they are terminal, when they are not. Doctors can make mistakes and give the wrong diagnosis. Elderly and those unable to speak for themselves, such as small children and those with cognitive deficits, would be subject to abuse if others are allowed to decide that they are no longer fit to live. There are already numerous examples of such incidences occurring in Oregon State, as I am sure you have now been made well aware. Please do not be swayed by the passionate few who are calling for the right to end their own lives when they choose. Although they make their demands, they want the time-honored profession of medicine involved with their choice, and they fail to think about the long-term consequences of such demands on Society. **Instead, do what is right for the people of Montana and vote NO ON SB 202.**

Sincerely,



Melchisedek L. Margaris, MD FAAFP
401 15th Ave. S., Suite 201
Great Falls, MT 59405